

Subject: FW: a Grass Planted at Westpoint Marina Elytrigia, not Paspalum
Date: Friday, July 20, 2012 3:56 PM
From: Ellen Miramontes <ellenm@bcdc.ca.gov>
To: Kevin Stephens <kstephens@kevinstephensdesign.com>
Cc: Silvia Robertson <srobertson@kevinstephensdesign.com>, Adrienne Klein <adriennek@bcdc.ca.gov>

Kevin,

Here is an email string with Peter Baye from last fall. Interesting to see that he specifically recommends use of *Leymus triticoides* whereas you found it to have low salt tolerance. I had understood it to be appropriate for use along Bay edge. He may be worth contacting for his input or perhaps he could point to others on the peninsula. Also, the local California Native Plant Society chapter may be able to provide great resources/people/contacts.

Regards,

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Ellen Miramontes
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----- Forwarded Message

From: baye <baye@earthlink.net>
Reply-To: <baye@earthlink.net>
Date: Thu, 22 Sep 2011 11:49:22 -0700
To: Ellen Miramontes <ellenm@bcdc.ca.gov>
Subject: RE: a Grass Planted at Westpoint Marina Elytrigia, not Paspalum

And I'm very grateful you brought it up! Glad to help redirect away from another needless point of invasion. This is how they start! I'm amazed at how many invasions are from planting the wrong species, including restoration projects without careful control of plant identification! Quite a few cases of inadvertent introduction of invasive exotics with restoration, alas.

I should have mentioned: planting time for *Leymus* is in cool, wet, early winter or late fall – soils fully

moistened, cool air temperatures. They leaf out in winter, and spread roots in winter; late start in spring gives advantage to weeds. Spring planting is NOT a good idea, even with irrigation (irrigation during the spring supports weeds more than plantings).

Joint Venture funded a tidal marsh ecotone vegetation stewardship guideline report I wrote for Marin Audubon in 2008 – it has some more info on *Leymus*. <http://www.marinaudubon.org/pdf/MAS%20tidemarsh%20ecotone%20veg%20mgmt%20final%202008-3.pdf>. More information is in the appendices, but I don't have the link handy.

PB

From: Ellen Miramontes [mailto:ellenm@bcdcc.ca.gov]

Sent: Thursday, September 22, 2011 10:50 AM

To: baye@earthlink.net

Subject: Re: a Grass Planted at Westpoint Marina *Elytrigia*, not *Paspalum*

Peter,

Thank you very much for the information. I will recommend that the project owners remove this grass and replace with *Leymus triticoides*. I really appreciate your expertise with this.

Thank you,

--

Ellen Miramontes

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On 9/22/11 9:50 AM, "baye" <baye@earthlink.net> wrote:

Ellen, the Westpoint Marina grass in the photo appears to be *Elytrigia pontica*, not *Paspalum*. *E. pontica* is a Russian wheatgrass that is dominant on some of the levees in Palo Alto due to past plantings. It is also invasive in subsaline soils, and used to be planted on levees around the bay for erosion control. It's locally abundant and invasive at Corte Madera, Mare Island, and Palo Alto, and turns up in Suisun Marsh. This planting seems to be suffering from more than drought or salinity; it is normally evergreen! I know the new levees at Westpoint Marina have a lot of acid sulfate

accumulated from oxidation of sulfidic deep muds. This is typical of that soil problem, which usually diminishes after about 4-5 years. It can be treated with lime.

There is a perfectly suitable and superior (horticulturally and ecologically) native alternative to Russian wheatgrass that provides superior esthetics, erosion control, and year-round green cover that spreads by itself and forms tough, erosion-resistant, low-maintenance sods: creeping wildrye, *Leymus triticoides*. It takes a few years to form a continuous sod, and can be oversown with temporary cover grasses that are already ubiquitously naturalized along the bay edge (though non-native), like inexpensive ryegrass (*Lolium*, similar in appearance to *Elytrigia*). (Note: that pragmatic adaptation for ornamental horticulture will not likely be recommended by restoration practitioners or exotic plant control advisors, but it may be considered "harm reduction" where the alternative is an existing stand of *Elytrigia*! No *Lolium* invasions will be fueled by a temporary cover crop at the marina; *Lolium* invasion is not seed-limited in S Bay.) When vigorous, closed stands are mature, *Leymus* can outcompete nearly all of the typical weeds of S Bay levees.

Local *Leymus* sources are best, but there are silvery-leaved forms from the N Bay and Suisun that can be used as ornamentals in situations like this, as a less damaging alternative to plants like *Elytrigia*. Creeping wildrye is also tolerant of acid sulfate soils – it was the first plant to recover on Marin Audubon's acid sulfate-affected new levee at Petaluma Marsh Expansion Project. If the owners are dissatisfied with the dead-straw appearance of their planting, I would recommend liming, removing Russian wheatgrass, and replanting with plugs of creeping wildrye. The Watershed Nursery in Richmond is growing it in bulk, and there may be some native plant nurseries in the south bay that have it.

From: Ellen Miramontes [mailto:ellenm@bcdca.gov]

Sent: Wednesday, September 21, 2011 3:46 PM

To: baye@earthlink.net

Cc: 'Brenda Grewell'

Subject: Re: Question Regarding a Grass Planted at Westpoint Marina

Peter,

Thank you for your quick response. Apparently the marina owner got the recommendation to use this grass from someone at UC Davis – I don't know who, perhaps someone within the Horticulture Department there. So I am curious to hear what you might think, Brenda, about the use of the grass. I am also wondering what both of your recommendations might be for removal of the grass that has already been planted there without our approval (see attached photo).

Thank you,